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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [UNGA](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIAN GOVERNMENT EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER UN  
HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Derek Westfall for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d)

¶1. Summary. Summary. MFA Head of Section for Security Council Affairs Tihomir Lulic called in Pol/Econ officers to express concern at a human rights report presented March 10 by Martin Schein Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism. Lulic said the report accuses Croatian intelligence services of being complicit in the 1995 abduction and rendition of a terrorism suspect to Egypt, where the suspect subsequently disappeared. He said the Croatian government had no knowledge of this alleged action, but noted that the individual referenced in the report's background material was arrested in 1995 and deported for an immigration violation immediately after his arrival in Croatia. He accused the author of the report of relying on unsubstantiated sources, and that it was unfair to include a reference to events that happened over 10 years ago in a report largely documenting human rights abuses around the world in 2007-2008.

¶2. According to the MFA, in September 1995, in the waning days of the so-called Homeland War, in which Croatia reclaimed its territory from Serbian separatists, an Egyptian national named Talat Fouad Qassem entered Croatia for unknown reasons and was arrested in September 1995 for immigration violations. After a hearing on September 14, he was deported into Bosnia. Background material, which is the basis for Croatia's inclusion in the report, alleges that after the terrorist suspect's deportation into Bosnia he was abducted by Croatian agents, transported to a ship, and then handed over to the Egyptian government. Allegedly while in the hands of Egyptian authorities, he disappeared.

¶3. MFA is objecting both to the charges - that Croatia participated in a so-called "rendition" of a terrorist suspect - but also the way in which the rapporteur gathered information and the age of the case. They claim the rapporteur relied on unsubstantiated internet reports in making his claim. They also question why a report focused on human rights violations in 2007-2008 was listing Croatia for an alleged human rights violation committed 13 years ago.

¶4. The GOC made no specific request of support or other action from the United States at this time, saying they simply wanted to inform us of their objections to Croatia's inclusion in a report in which the United States was also prominently mentioned.

BRADTKE